United Nations A/63/851

General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 May 2009

Original: English

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda item 104 (c)
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 7 May 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to forward herewith the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the protection and promotion of human rights in accordance with resolution 60/251 in respect of the candidature of Nigeria for re-election to the United Nations Human Rights Council (see annex).

It will be highly appreciated if you could assist in forwarding it to the appropriate quarters for maximum dissemination, as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) U. Joy **Ogwu**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 7 May 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Aide-memoire on the candidature of Nigeria for re-election to the Human Rights Council

Candidature

1. The Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, after consultations with its regional and international allies, and upon the endorsement by the African Union, has decided to put forward its candidature for re-election to the United Nations Human Rights Council for 2010-2012.

2. Nigeria has been playing a major role in Council since joining it in 2006, using its influence and commitment to advance the work of the Council, especially during the institution-building process. It is a mark of the recognition of Nigeria's key role that it was elected President of the Human Rights Council last June and member of the Advisory Council.

3. Nigeria's re-election would not only advance the work of the Council, but would also afford the country the opportunity to continue to share best practices with other members in a way that promotes the enjoyment of human rights in the country and around the world.

Background

4. Nigeria's large population of about 140 million, coupled with its wide cultural, religious and legal diversity, presents the country with enormous human rights challenges. Furthermore, long years of military rule had undermined the development of a viable human rights tradition. However, since the return to democratic rule in 1999, great strides have been made to enhance the enjoyment of human rights in the country. The Yar'Adua administration's "rule-of-law" policy, with emphasis on the due application of the law and respect for the rights of all citizens, is at the heart of the country's new human rights strategy.

Commitment to human rights

5. Nigeria has signed and ratified all the majority regional and international human rights and humanitarian law instruments. In fulfilment of its pledges and commitments upon admission to the Council in 2006, Nigeria signed the instruments of accession to the following human rights instruments:

- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.
- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

It has also ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Advancing human rights at the national level

6. In accordance with its determination to enhance the enjoyment of fundamental and human rights as stipulated in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Government has embarked on various institutional and structural initiatives, including:

- Bill submitted to the National Assembly to, among others, review the status and role of the National Human Rights Commission in accordance with the Paris Principles.
- Various bills with the intent to reform the administration of justice system, the police and prison services are before the National Assembly. In addition, the Government has set up a national committee to review the activities of the Nigeria Police with a view enhancing their efficiency.
- The preparation and endorsement by the Federal Government of a National Action Plan on Human Rights, as a road map for the effective fulfilment of human rights obligations and the overall improvement in the enjoyment of human rights in the country.
- The convening of a National Consultative Forum in fulfilment of the recommendation of the Human Rights Council in the preparation for the Universal Periodic Review. The Government has decided to make the National Consultative Forum an annual event for improving dialogue on human rights among all stakeholders.
- The establishment of a National Committee on the Death Penalty.
- The intensified fight against corruption and economic crimes through the strengthening of the various bodies set up in this regard.
- The considerable success (recognized by many international bodies) of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons in curbing the traffic in persons, especially women and children.

Advancing human rights at the international level

7. In accordance with the pledges and commitments made to the Council prior to its admission in 2006, Nigeria continues to play a very active role in the activities of the Human Rights Council, as well as subjecting itself to the various special procedures of the Council and the treaty bodies — many of which have commended the country for its cooperation, assistance and efforts during visits.

8. Nigeria's preparation, compilation and presentation of its national report under the Universal Periodic Review is another example of Nigeria's commitment, not only to international efforts on human rights, but also to a genuine determination to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights in the country. The format and outcome of Nigeria's National Consultative Forum is a best practice which Nigeria has shared with the international community.

Voluntary pledges and commitments

9. Nigeria stands by, and rehashes, all of the commitments it made in 2006, and reiterates, in particular, its commitment to:

- Engage actively with the Human Rights Council to promote human rights in and outside Nigeria.
- Contribute to efforts to improve the effectiveness of the Human Rights Council.
- Cooperate with all treaty bodies, especially in the timely submission of periodic reports.
- Cooperate with all special procedures of the United Nations aimed at improving the promotion and protection of human rights.
- Intensify efforts to ensure the ratification and/or domestication of all outstanding human rights instruments.
- Implement all the recommendations accepted by the country contained in the Universal Periodic Review report, as well as give active consideration to those noted for further examination by virtue of constitutional, cultural or other implications.
- Continue to make its best effort to enhance the protection and promotion of human rights in Nigeria.